

Phillips-Thompson Building
200, 202, 204 and 206 East Fourth Street
Wilmington
New Castle County
Delaware

HABS No. DE-213

HABS
DEL,
2-WILM.,
52-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PHILLIPS-THOMPSON BUILDING

HABS No. DE-213

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Location: The Phillips-Thompson Building is located in the City of Wilmington, Delaware, at the southeast corner of the intersection of French and Fourth Streets. The four addresses -- composed of 200, 202, 204, and 206 East Fourth Street -- face north overlooking East Fourth Street. The corner address, 200 East Fourth Street, has a second street facade rising above French Street.

Present Owner: City of Wilmington
City-County Building
800 French Street
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Present Occupants: Russell F. Crowe
Wholesale Produce
204 East Fourth Street

Agnes Morris
204 East Fourth Street

Crowe's Seafood
206 East Fourth Street

Vacant
200 and 202 East Fourth Street

Present Use: 200 and 202 East Fourth Street
Vacant

204 and 206 East Fourth Street
Commercial and residential

Significance: Listed in the National Register of Historic Places on April 16, 1980, the Phillips-Thompson Building is an excellent example of late nineteenth-century urban commercial architecture. Built in 1886 and only superficially modified since 1891, the Phillips-Thompson Building has always housed a variety of tenants ranging from street level commission merchants to upper story renters and meeting halls. Erected at the hub of the late nineteenth-century market district which ran along East Fourth Street between King and Walnut Streets, the Phillips-Thompson Building is the last standing structure in the area which describes that period of Wilmington's commercial history.

Part 1. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

A.1. Date of Erection. The Phillips-Thompson Building was completed in 1886, as indicated by its first mention in the 1886 business directory for the City of Wilmington. From the period of construction to the present, the Phillips-Thompson Building has been a multi-purpose commercial and residential structure.

A.2. Original and Subsequent Occupants. The occupants of the Phillips-Thompson Building have fallen into three major categories throughout its nearly one hundred year history. The ground floor commercial spaces have been the business premises of agricultural stores, produce stands, carpenters, carriage outfitters and other concerns. The upper stories have similarly served as apartments, meeting halls, and storage lofts. The chronology of occupants for 200-202 and 204-206 East Fourth Street have been transcribed from Wilmington Street directories and are as follows:

| | <u>200 East Fourth Street</u> | <u>202 East Fourth Street</u> |
|-----------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1888 | William C. Phillips - Flour, Feed and Seeds | Vacant |
| 1889 | Phillips Building - 1. Knights of Lawrence 2. Albert Boy's Club 3. Reformed Methodist Church | Phillips & Company |
| 1890 | Phillips Building - W. C. Phillips - Flour and Seeds | Phillips & Company |
| 1891-1976 | (200-202 consolidated) Phillips & Thompson Company - Flour, Feed, etc. | |

| | <u>204 East Fourth Street</u> | <u>206 East Fourth Street</u> |
|------|---|--|
| 1887 | C. F. Welch & Company | J. L. Cooper Manufacturing Company |
| 1888 | C. F. Welch & Company | Vacant |
| 1889 | C. F. Welch & Company | Spicer & Bickel-Wholesale John C. Wilson - Carter JRD Seeds & Son - Carpenters and Builders |
| 1890 | C. F. Welch & Company | McLluain & Company - Commission Merchant E. S. Beswick - JRD Seeds & Son |
| 1891 | C. F. Welch & Company - Wholesale Grocer | J no Weiser & Company - Commission Merchant |
| 1892 | C. F. Welch & Company - Wholesale Grocer | M. T. Reybold - Machinery |
| 1893 | Samuel H. Evans - Commission Merchant | J no B Mon Gar - Paint Manufacturer |
| 1894 | Vacant | J no B Mon Gar.- Paints (206-208) |
| 1895 | Sommers Brothers - Shoes | Wickersham & Company - Coach Hardward (206-208) |
| 1896 | Vacant | Wickersham & Company - Coach Hardware |
| 1897 | Somers H. Selover - Oysters | Wickersham & Company - Coach Hardware |
| 1898 | Somers H. Selover - Oysters | Wickersham & Company - Coach Hardware |
| 1899 | Somers H. Selover - Oysters | Wickersham & Company - Carriage Hardware |
| | Win F. Bauer - Cigars | |
| 1900 | Booker, Scott & Moore Company - Candy Manufacturers | Wickersham & Company - Carriage Hardware |

| | <u>204 East Fourth Street</u> | <u>206 East Fourth Street</u> |
|------|--|---|
| 1901 | Booker, Scott & Moore Company - Candy Manufacturers | Retail Grocers' Exchange |
| 1902 | Booker, Scott & Moore Company - Candy Manufacturers & Jobbers | Retail Grocers' Exchange |
| 1903 | Booker, Scott & Moore Company - Wholesale Confectioners | Retail Grocers' Exchange - Wholesale Grocers and Com- mercial Merchants |
| 1904 | Booker, Scott & Moore Company - Confectioners & Grocers' Supplies | Retail Grocers' Exchange |
| 1905 | National Biscuit Company | Retail Grocers' Exchange - Wholesale Grocers |
| 1906 | National Biscuit Company - Cokes and Crackers | Retail Grocers' Exchange |
| 1907 | National Biscuit Company - Cokes and Crackers | Retail Grocers' Exchange |
| 1908 | National Biscuit Company - Cokes and Crackers | Retail Grocers' Exchange |
| 1909 | National Biscuit Company - Cokes and Crackers | Retail Grocers' Exchange |
| 1910 | National Biscuit Company - | Retail Grocers' Exchange |
| 1911 | Retail Grocers' Exchange | Retail Grocers' Exchange |
| 1912 | Retail Grocers' Exchange | Retail Grocers' Exchange |
| 1913 | Retail Grocers' Exchange | Retail Grocers' Exchange |
| 1914 | Nicholson Candy Company | Nicholson Candy Company |
| 1915 | | |
| 1916 | Mabel Adams - Furnished Rooms | Nicholson Candy Company |
| 1917 | Keystone Field Club | Collier, Battis & Company Wholesale Confectioners |

| | <u>204 East Fourth Street</u> | <u>206 East Fourth Street</u> |
|---------------|--|---|
| 1917 | California Fruit Company | |
| 1918 | Dela Commission | Nicholson Candy Company |
| 1919 | Merchant | Collier, Battis & Company - Wholesale Confectioners |
| 1920 | | |
| 1921- 1922 | Frazier-Booker Company - Commercial Merchant Keystone Field Club Frazier & Allen - Commercial Merchant | Melvin & Reed - Commercial Merchant |
| 1923- 1924 | Seward C L & Son - Commercial Merchant | Melvin Reed - Commercial Merchant 204½ Bway Sign Shop |
| 1925 | | |
| 1926- 1927 | McMullen, Jas. H. - Fruits 204½ - Vacant | Reed, Wm. W. - Produce |
| 1928- 1929 | Reid, Wm. W. - Produce 204½ - Keystone Field Club | Eisenman, Morris J.- Produce Kaufman, Thos. - Tinsmith 3rd floor - Vacant |
| 1930- 1931 | Reid, Wm. W. - Produce 204½ - Bessie Lynch Lina Conaway- Widow | Casey, Edward, M. - Manager Eisenman, Morris J. Kaufman, Thos. - Tinsmith 3rd Floor - Vacant |
| 1932- 1933 | Reid, Wm. W.- Produce Messick, Chas. L. - Proofreader.-News Journal Company | Casey, Edward M. Eisenman, Morris J. - Produce Weaver, Samuel - Iron Worker |
| 1934- 1935 | Reid, Wm. W.- Produce Cole, John E. & Sarah A.- Painter Messick, Chas. L. | Ash, Lilley - Widow Eisenman, Morris J. - Produce |

| | <u>204 East Fourth Street</u> | <u>206 East Fourth Street</u> |
|----------------|---|---|
| 1936 | Reid, Wm. W. - Produce Cole, John E. Messick, Jas. L. | Eisenman, Morris J. - Produce |
| 1938 | Crowe, Walter - Produce | Eisenman, Millie - Produce William, Jas. E. |
| 1940 | Crowe, Walter W. - Produce | Eisenman, Millie - Produce Truitt, Harry - Laborer Parry, Harvey - Chauffeur |
| 1942 | Crowe, Walter W. - Produce | Sun-Ripe Banana Company McIlvain, Luther - Laborer Parry, Harvey - USN |
| 1944 | Crowe, Walter W. - Produce | McIlvain, Luther - Laborer Parry, Harvey P. |
| 1946 - 1947 | Kemske, Jesse M. (Mrs.) | Dow, Chas. I. - Machinist McIlvain, Luther |
| 1948- 1949 | Crowe, Walter W. - Produce Smallwood, Edw. Jr. - Boilermaker | Brown, Leonard J. - Huckster McIlvain, Luther - Watchman |
| 1950 | Crowe, Walter W. - Produce Morris, Agnes L. (Mrs.) Smallwood, Edw. Jr. Morris, Agnes L. (Mrs.) Smallwood, Edw. Jr. | Brown, Leonard J. McIlvain, Luther |
| 1952 | Crowe, Walter W. - Produce Morris, Agnes L. Ward, Anna (Mrs.) | Brown, Leonard J. - McIlvain, Luther |

| | <u>204 East Fourth Street</u> | <u>206 East Fourth Street</u> |
|------|--|---|
| 1955 | Crowe, Walter W. - Produce Morris, Agnes L. Ward, Anna | Brown, Leonard J. McIlvain, Luther |
| 1957 | Crowe, Russell F. - Produce (Wholesale) Crowe's Seafood Morris, Agnes Ward, Anna | Brown, Leonard J. - McIlvain, Luther |
| 1959 | Ward, Anna | McIlvain, Luther |
| 1961 | Crowe, Russell F. - Wholesale Produce Crowe's Seafood | Gross, Adam - Salesman |
| 1963 | Crowe, Russell F. - Wholesale Produce Crowe's Seafood | Gross, Adam - Salesman |
| 1964 | Crowe's Seafood | McIlvain, Luther - Brown, Minnie |
| 1965 | Crowe, Russell F. - Wholesale Produce | Crowe's Seafood - Retail Brown, Minnie McIlvain, Luther |
| 1966 | Crowe, Russell F. - Wholesale Produce | Crowe's Seafood - Retail Brown, Minnie D. McIlvain, Luther |
| 1967 | Crowe, Russell F. - Wholesale Produce | McIlvain, Luther - |
| 1968 | Crowe, Russell F. - Wholesale Produce | McIlvain, Luther |
| 1969 | Crowe, Russell F. - Wholesale Produce | McIlvain, Luther |
| 1970 | Crowe, Russell F. - Wholesale Produce Morris, Agnes | McIlvain, Luther |
| 1971 | Morris, Agnes | McIlvain, Luther |

| | <u>204 East Fourth Street</u> | <u>206 East Fourth Street</u> |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1972 | Morris, Agnes | McIlvain, Luther |
| 1973 | Morris, Agnes | McIlvain, Luther |
| 1974 | Morris, Agnes | McIlvain, Luther |
| 1975 | Morris, Agnes | McIlvain, Luther Thompson, Reginald C. |
| 1976 | Morris, Agnes | Crowe's Seafood Brown, Minnie D. |

A.3. Original Plans and Construction. The Phillips-Thompson block was built in 1886 as a row of four commercial addresses with upper story apartments and public meeting halls. The ground floor storefronts were open to Fourth Street and provided with an unpartitioned single room. The upper stories were less uniform in character with 204 and 206 East Fourth Street containing several apartments and 200 and 202 East Fourth Street furnished with offices and a large open meeting hall on the third floor.

All load bearing construction consisted of brick on a rubble stone foundation and substantial joists socketed into the masonry walls. The joists were placed on an east-west axis without use of summer beams or girders and were the only structural timbers within the overall structure.

The shallow gable roof framing runs on a north-south axis and is not visible due to original plaster ceilings.

A.4. Alterations and Additions. The only major alterations made to the Phillips-Thompson block were those necessary for the consolidation of 200 and 202 East Fourth Street into a single business operation around 1890. At this time the storefront facade was reworked to create a single entrance. The original stairs to the upper stories were removed and relocated in the south-east corner of the building, and staging for storage lofts as well as overhead line shafting for machinery was installed on the second floor. Minor changes throughout the block involved the replacement of broken transom and window lights, the reworking of interior finishes, and the modification of doorways to facilitate transportation into the storefronts of 204 and 206 East Fourth Street.

The sum of these alterations have left the fabric and appearance of the Phillips-Thompson Block little changed from its circa 1890 character.

B. Historical Context. From the date of its construction in 1886 until the 1950s, the Phillips-Thompson Building was the architectural anchor for a business neighborhood composed of commission merchants and small service businesses. In the early twentieth century, the commission merchants would accept produce from local farmers to be sold directly to grocery stores, restaurants and hotels or to hucksters who would pick up their wares from

the merchants and sell them door-to-door throughout the city. The only non-commission merchandising took place with the establishment of a wholesale marketing link in Philadelphia. In the period from 1930 to 1950 the neighborhood included a barber shop, grocery stores, and restaurants as well as the produce stands which operated from beneath awnings extending from the storefronts out over the sidewalks. The area, described by one resident as "always bustling," was also the scene of several extra-legal businesses including brothels, gambling dens, and rum-running during prohibition.

As an open market, Fourth Street from King to Walnut Streets replaced the older Upper Market located on Fourth (then High) Street between Market and Shipley Streets in the early nineteenth century. The occupants of 200, 202, 204 and 206 East Fourth Street clearly reflect the nature of this early twentieth-century business district with establishments including agricultural suppliers, builders, candy manufacturers, commission merchants and machinists. Following redevelopment efforts in the area during the 1960s all that remains of the once-busy neighborhood are the merchants in the 204 and 206 units of the Phillips-Thompson Building and a few produce shops and fish markets on nearby King Street. Today, the Phillips-Thompson Building is the last major architectural acknowledgement of the commercial vitality and day-to-day business that once characterized the entire neighborhood.

Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement.

A.1. Architectural Character. The exterior of the Phillips-Thompson Building, (200, 202, 204, and 206 East Front Street) retains nearly all of its late nineteenth-century detailing and much of its architectural integrity as a late Victorian commercial building. As a largely unaltered series of store fronts, the Phillips-Thompson Building represents a comparatively rare urban survival of a turn-of-the-century commercial streetscape.

A.2. Condition of Fabric. Despite hard commercial usage, the Phillips-Thompson Building remains in excellent structural condition. Where the roof has gone unrepaired, plaster has fallen or been discolored by rain seepage in the third story meeting hall and apartments. The apartments are still occupied by a number of tenants, and 204 and 206 East Fourth continue in operation as viable wholesale seafood and produce businesses. Continually occupied and structurally sound, 204 and 206 East Fourth Street coupled with the Phillips-Thompson Store, which remained in operation until the spring of 1981, are fine examples of multi-use late nineteenth century residential spaces.

B. Description of Exterior.

B.1. Overall Dimensions. The overall dimensions for the Phillips-Thompson Building, including 200, 202, 204, and 206 East Fourth Street, is approximately forty-seven feet by ninety-four feet. The building is further divided into two approximately forty-seven foot squares with each of these halves originally containing a roughly twenty-four foot shop front and running the full depth of the structure.

B.2. Foundations. The foundations for the Phillips-Thompson Building are of rubble stone masonry rising to the present sidewalk level. The rubble walls are laid in a lime mortar with coarsely parged joints. The brick walls rise from the sidewalk level on the north and west elevations in stretcher bond. The south wall begins at the foundation in nine-course common bond, while the east wall is obscured by later buildings.

B.3. Walls. The street front exterior walls of the Phillips-Thompson Store and adjoining addresses are of brick construction laid in stretcher bond finished with narrow lime mortar joints. The individual bricks within the walls are of mass manufacture molded in lubricated forms and finished with a highly fired body and smooth surface. Molded and corbelled brick are employed for upper story window heads, belt courses and cornices. The rear wall is of nine-course common bond construction laid with coarser textured bricks.

B.4. Structural System, Framing. The entire structure is carried on brick load-bearing exterior and partition walls into which are set timber joists running the width of each of the four units. Where the required space is greater than approximately twenty feet, as in the first and third floors

of 200 - 202 Fourth Street, piers or "Samson" posts and girders have been inserted as intermediate supports. In the third floor of 200 - 202 Fourth Street, these load-bearing posts are of cast iron finished as narrow diameter columns. On the ground floor of the same address, and for the second story storage platforms, the posts are sawn and finished nine-inch square timbers.

B.5. Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads. All four addresses of the Phillips-Thompson group retain large elements of their original late nineteenth-century storefronts, with those for 204 and 206 being decoratively distinct from that for the old agricultural store. For all the units, the Fourth Street storefronts occupied the full width of the ground floor. The storefronts can best be described in two sections: the first focusing on the Phillips-Thompson Store, and the second on 204 and 206 East Fourth Street.

Although originally built as two distinct commercial facades in the 1880s, the ground floor storefront of the Phillips-Thompson Building was unified into a single continuous elevation shortly after the consolidation of 200 and 202. The Phillips-Thompson Company storefront wrapped around the corner of Fourth and French Streets, and covered the entire ground floor elevation along both streets. The half of the structure at 202 East Fourth Street still possesses its first period trim, while 200 East Fourth Street illustrates the consolidation of the two addresses. As first built, the storefront for 202 East Fourth Street was broken into an asymmetrical three-bay facade. The opening adjacent to the corner business was built as a doorway leading directly into a stairway running to the upper floors of the building. The remaining two openings were a shop door and display window. All three openings were capped with a broken entablature composed of a frieze, cornice and fascia. The decorative elements for the frieze built flush to the wall consist of a series of composite moldings beginning at the bottom with a quirked convex profile rising to a half-round molding and then to an eight-inch face board divided into six-inch squares with the center of each square containing a two-inch square boss. Above the face board runs a second set of quirked concave and half-round molding strips. The cornice area is a plain, scantling constructed cove. Capping the entablature is an unornamented eight-inch face convex fascia. The central element spanning the doorway into 202 projects six inches to one foot beyond the vertical plane of the building facade and incorporates all the detailing found in the other section of the entablature with the difference being the reversed positioning of the cove cornice and bossed frieze. The projecting central element is also visually carried on a pair of composite sawn scrollwork brackets with highly stylized punchwork quatrefoils piercing their sides. The storefront doorway and window are enframed as a single opening with a heavy timber architrave composed of posts with chamfered edges and flared terminals footed onto a continuous marble sill. The lintels are finished in the same manner. The inside surfaces of posts and lintels are further elaborated with a two-inch band of hexpartite reeding. Separating the two openings is a single wood column rising from a square plinth to a series of intersecting forty-five degree planes and surmounted by a second, squared and unadorned plinth. The second plinth carries a half-round base molding, then a chamfered column flaring in from the base upwards. The capital is constituted through a deeply exaggerated lamb's tongue terminal. Rising from the capital is a second set of

intersecting forty-five degree angle planes carrying a simply squared timber ornamented only with a turned wooden boss and capped with one of the two consoles rising to visually carry the projecting entablature. Both doorway and window are capped with basic two-light transoms surrounded and divided by smaller rectangular and square lights set into quirked quarter-round muntins. The shop window was also partitioned into two units with a three-sided concave molding strip.

The doorway entering the vestibule and stairway leading to the upper stories of the building was closed in at the bottom with an unornamented sill to create a second shop window. Below the window and above a granite door sill, the door was infilled with two-inch scantling and brick impressed sheet metal siding.

The storefront of the original Phillips-Thompson Store was remodeled when 200 and 202 East Fourth Street were consolidated into a single business concern. The storefront of 200 was set off from the entrance into 202 by a single molded tin console rising from a squared base to a quirked cyma-reversa through a cove molding and finished with a composite quirked cyma-reversa molding surmounted by a lozenge embossed panel with a round arched cap. The second period wood and metal entablature, which continues to French Street and around the corner to cover the first window opening, is distinctly less ornate than the first period entablature surviving on the 202 East Fourth Street unit. The frieze, defined on the bottom by a quirked concave molding and on the top by a cove cornice finished with a quarter-round molding, bears the legend "POULTRY SUPPLIES - FERTILIZERS - GARDEN TOOLS - INSECTICIDES - SPRAYERS / COAL AND FUEL OIL". The fascia above the cornice consists of a central cyma-reversa paralleled by pairs of simply squared molding strips. Below the entablature runs a transom of mid-twentieth century pebbled glass lights, with six fronting on Fourth Street and two on French Street.

Finally, the remaining bays of the French Street facade of 200 East Fourth Street originally had no porches or other decoration beyond brick arched openings. In the mid-twentieth century, however, an aluminum porch roof suspended from four diagonally set tie rods was added to shelter the side door.

Although contemporary to 200 and 202 East Fourth Street, the storefronts for neighboring 204 and 206 East Fourth Street are finished in a different style. As with the adjoining numbers, these two addresses share a continuous storefront and are divided by a centrally located load-bearing masonry wall abutting a centrally placed stair leading to the upper floors. The shed roof porch is carried on two pairs of composite hammer beam trusses defining each storefront and the entrance between them. Sealed underneath with two-inch beaded edge boarding, the shed roof possesses only a board fascia capped with a single strip of quirked concave molding. The ends of the hammer beam trusses extend from cyma-reversa consoles topped with pyramidal bosses. The trusses themselves are anchored into the wall with iron bolts and composed of two mortice-and-tenoned timbers set at ninety degrees to one another and bridged with curved wooden braces toed into both the upper and lower members. The roof is further braced with iron "L" braces bolted into the storefront

and roof framing. The two storefronts were each treated as three-bay facades composed of three pairs of double doors. The eastern most vertical support for 204 East Fourth Street has been removed and a larger loading bay created for the current produce concern.

Each of the three bays of the two storefronts is defined by three plain timber piers rising approximately seven-feet from marble sills to a beveled top narrowing down to chamfered edge timbers with flared terminals. The lintels and timbers are finished on the interior face with a two-inch wide band of hexpartite reeding. The two doorways, one between the two storefronts and the other at the east end of the building, lead to the upper stories of 204 and 206 East Fourth Street and are finished in the same fashion. Above all the doorways were pairs of transom windows. Each pair contained two large central lights surrounded by smaller red and blue square and rectangular lights. The transoms for 206 East Fourth Street, however, have been replaced with plain four-light transoms, as has the one for the hallway between the two stores.

B.6. Chimneys. None of the storefronts or upper stories possesses a major chimney pile, although all were formerly heated with wood, coal or oil stoves. Chimneys for stove flues are located along the Fourth Street axis of the block and are of brick construction with four coarse corbelled caps and later terracotta chimney pots.

B.7.a. Doorways and Doors. The storefronts for all four addresses have been described in section B.5. The openings themselves are fitted with double doors each with a rectangular glass light over a single slightly raised panel. The rails for the door lights and panels have chamfered edges with flared terminals, while the stiles are left unadorned.

The doorway on the French Street elevation of the Phillips-Thompson Building at 200 East Fourth Street is framed by a continuous chamfered architrave with hexpartite reeding in the reveals. A lintel separating the double doors from the transom is similarly reeded with chamfered edges and flared terminals. The transom itself contained two large lights surrounded by a series of smaller square and rectangular panes. The southernmost of the large lights has been replaced with a louvered metal ventilator. The double doors are identical to those found throughout the rest of the building on the ground floor.

B.7.b. Windows and Shutters. Each of the four addresses contains a symmetrical three-bay fenestration on the second and third floors. The openings are capped with alternating segmentally arched or squared lintel openings carried on four-course corbelled header supports. Directly above the corbelled courses are molded brick blocks containing floral motifs. For the segmentally arched openings the decorative corner blocks contain an incised tracery of vines with four palmette-like clusters of leaves surrounding a fifth centrally placed cluster. The corner blocks for the squared lintels are ornamented with laurel wreaths executed in raised relief. Both squared and segmentally arched openings are composed of two courses, with the lower course alternating raised and recessed brick surfaces creating a dentillated profile and the upper course composed entirely of headers extending an inch beyond the projecting

dentils. The surface contained between the underside of the segmented arches and the top of the window frames is further elaborated with a scrolled sawn-work tracery.

All the window openings contain two-over-two light sash with chamfered frames and plank sills extending approximately two inches beyond either side of the openings.

B.7.c. Belt Course. A four-course brick belt course visually separates the second and third stories. Running the full length of the four addresses along East Fourth Street and the depth of the Phillips-Thompson Store along French Street, the belt course jogs down six courses from 202 to 204 East Fourth. The four courses are composed of two projecting stretcher bond courses bracketing two staggered mouse-tooth courses consisting of headers diagonally set into the masonry wall.

B.8. Roof.

B.8.a. Shape and Covering. The roof of the Phillips-Thompson Building is a shallow gable carried on a composite truss system utilizing common rafters. The rafters are covered with board subroofing which is, in turn, covered with the exterior weatherproofing material. The shallow gables are masked by the continuation of the cornice in a parapet-like arrangement over the French Street elevations.

B.8.b. Cornice, Eaves. The cornice of the four addresses composing the Phillips-Thompson Building rises in a series of conselled brick moldings to a wooden entablature surmounted by two wooden fans centrally placed between 200 and 202, and 204 and 206 East Fourth Street. From the brick facade the cornice is corbelled out first with three courses of header bond, then an additional three courses of header bond forming brick consoles spaced approximately six inches apart, and finally completed with a flush three-course stretcher bond profile extending an inch beyond profile extending an inch beyond the surface of the uppermost headers capping the consoles.

The wooden cornice for each of the two pairs of addresses is divided into a balanced tripartite arrangement with the central elements projecting beyond the vertical plane of the wall and carrying the two fans. Resting on a quirked quarter-round molding, the cornice carries a frieze of stile paneled blocks each fitted with a single square boss in a treatment repetitive of that described in section B.5. for 202 East Fourth Street. Above the frieze is a boxed-in fascia capped with cove molding. The overall cornice breaks forward approximately six inches over the third and fourth windows for an approximate six-foot length. Each projecting central element carries a fan constructed of applied tapering boards radiating out from a half round center. The fan itself is recessed within a round arched corbelled wood molding projecting out in two narrow equal size planes. Although only one remains in situ, a wood flag pole was mounted atop each of the two fans.

C. Description of Interior.

C.1. Floor Plans. Built as four separate addresses in the 1880s, the floor plan of 200, 202, 204, and 206 East Fourth Street now contains only three ground floor units. The reduction in ground floor spaces was a result of removing a brick load-bearing wall and combining the 200 and 202 units into a single operation around 1890. Although the Phillips-Thompson Building is the product of a single building period, the floor plans are best described separately as 200-202 and 204-206 East Fourth Street.

200-202 East Fourth Street were combined in 1889 as Phillips & Co. after 202 had been vacant since the construction of the building two to three years before. As the building stands today, the basement, first, second and third floor plans reflect the early consolidation of the two addresses. The first floor, which was the primary display and sales area, is a large open room with cast iron columns carrying the load-bearing brick wall still in place on the second floor. Entered from either Fourth or French Streets, the corner business was left open with a seed counter located on the west wall and two banks of additional counter space running the depth of the front section of the building. Partitioned off the east end of the first floor were two small offices walled in with narrow board wainscot and sash windows. The office in the northeast corner contained a safe and an iron and brass circular stairwell leading down into a storage vault containing the company records. In the southeast corner of the first floor situated behind the smaller office was an alcove containing staging for the storage of stock, seed bins along the west wall where a remaining portion of the original load-bearing wall had been left in situ, additional seed bins along the south wall, and a second period stair leading to the upper stories of the building. In the adjoining space, which was originally the rear of 200 East Fourth Street, is another tier of storage staging and a freight elevator housing running from the basement below all the way up to the third story.

The second floor plan is composed of two distinct areas defined by a centrally placed brick load-bearing wall. Over the 200 East Fourth Street address, the western room has been subdivided into two smaller spaces by a one-inch thick board partition. The front or north room contains a ladder stair leading to the third floor in the northwest corner and a single storage cupboard built of scrap lumber. The rear or south room is furnished only with the freight elevator housing and heavy plank base for additional machinery (now removed) that was belt driven from overhead line shafting.

Over the 202 East Fourth Street address, the second floor is a single open space containing staging for storage lots and stair closet and a lavatory in the rear southeast corner. The staging, erected in two periods, runs the complete depth of the building and is separated by a five-foot wide aisle open to the ceiling. The stair closet in the southeast corner is framed in with scantling walling and leads down to the first floor as well as up a short run of steps to a later lavatory containing a single toilet and sink.

The third floor of the Phillips-Thompson Store is now a large open storage loft with a ladder stair in the northwest corner leading back down to the

second floor and two centrally located cast iron columns used in lieu of the brick load-bearing walls found in the lower floors. Originally, the rear of the third floor had been screened off from the front with vertical board walls. In the first period arrangement, these partitions defined two rooms and a stairwell that rose from the 202 side of the floor below. Directly above the stair was a hatchway leading to the roof. Towards the southwest corner of the room is the head of the elevator housing and in the northwest corner is the opening for the ladder stair leading down to the second floor.

The basement plan is akin to the second floor arrangement. Against the west wall is the base of the elevator and in the southeast corner stands the second period stair winding up to the first floor. A brick load-bearing wall runs the full depth of the basement, but is open at each end to allow traffic between the combined 200 and 202 addresses. In the southeast corner of 200 East Fourth Street is a scantling walled workman's toilet dating to the period of initial construction. Also present in the northeast corner of 202 East Fourth Street is the walling around the storage vault located beneath the first floor office.

The spatial arrangement of 204-206 East Fourth Street is that of two discrete formal units flanked by separate stairs leading to apartments in the second and third story. The first floor plans of 204 and 206 are open shops with later partitions and storage spaces added on through the structure's history. Crowe's wholesale produce concern at 204 is simply an open warehouse with an office framed in at the southeast corner. Crowe's Seafood, or 206 East Fourth Street, has also been left open with a modern office added to the east wall, sinks placed along the west wall, and two walk-in freezer lockers filling in the rear wall. Lobby entrances and stairwells situated against the east wall of each unit lead to second and third story apartments.

C.2. Stairways. There are several stairways in the Phillips-Thompson Building including two original runs leading to the upper stories of 204 and 206 East Fourth Street and two second period stairways in 200 and 202 East Fourth Street.

The original stairs dating from the 1886 construction period are located against the east walls of 204 and 206. Each of these stairwells was reached through a small vestibule opening directly onto the street and proceeded in a straight run to a second floor landing. At the landing one door opened to the west into the second floor apartments, while a second door opened onto a second run of steps leading up to the third floor rooms. A similar arrangement was in place for the Phillips-Thompson Store, but was removed during the early alterations made to the building. In each stairwell a nine-inch tall baseboard paralleled the flight of stairs. The baseboard was a composite of two-inch tall cyma-reversa tacked to a seven-inch tall board finished off at the base with a one-and-a-half-inch quirked concave molding strip.

The stairways present in 200-202 East Fourth Street date to the circa 1890 consolidation of the two addresses into a single business enterprise. The principal stair located in the southeast corner of 202 connects the basement, first and second floors. This stair contains several short flights of

steps leading up to intermediate landings and turning 180 degrees to enter the floor above. On the first and second floors the stairs are housed in vertical board closets. The walling for the closets is composed of three-inch face beaded edge boards placed in a light stud framing. The remaining stair is a ladder-like affair rising in the northeast corner from the second to the third floor. The steps are trenched into the stringers, and the overall stair lacks handrails or any other ornament.

The original stair for 200-202 East Fourth Street ascended from the sidewalk up a series of straight runs to the upper stories and was located on the east side of the load-bearing brick wall formerly separating the two addresses. Scars in the plaster walls and the flooring of the second story of 202 East Fourth Street show the location of the removed stair.

C.3. Flooring. All flooring for the Phillips-Thompson block was originally of one-inch thick by two-inch face pine nailed directly to the floor joists bedded in the masonry walls. Later flooring for the second story storage lofts contain one-inch thick by three-and-a-half-inch face tongue-and-groove boards laid over composite joists. Evidence for sub-flooring or fire-proofing found in commercial and industrial buildings of the late nineteenth century was not present.

C.4. Wall and Ceiling Finish. As with the description of the floor plan in Section C.1, it is best to describe the wall and ceiling finishes of the Phillips-Thompson Building under the two units composed of 200-202 and 204-206 East Fourth Street.

The first floor walls at 200-202 East Fourth Street are lime based plaster applied directly to the interior surface of the brick walls. These walls, as well as the ceiling of the 202 half of the Phillips-Thompson Store, are painted with a pale yellow enamel over earlier coats of whitewash. The plaster ceiling is applied to circular sawn wooden lath fixed to the undersides of the second story joists with wire nails. Of particular note is the pressed tin ceiling in the 200 section of the store.

The pressed tin ceiling of the 200 East Fourth Street section at the Phillips-Thompson Building is composed of one-foot square panels bordered by reeding with a fleur-de-lis in each corner. Between each of these raised corner elements runs a series of raised circular motifs. Inside the square described by the terminals of the fleur-de-lis is a second recessed panel containing floral corner moldings interspersed with raised relief borders and rising inward to an unadorned panel. The cornice for the ceiling is also of decoratively pressed tin with a seven-inch entablature rising from the plain plaster wall. The central element in the entablature is an arcuated frieze with each round arched motif flanked by raised relief vertical piping. Below the frieze are two narrow bands of additional pressed tin molding. The uppermost band contains an interlocking service of isosceles triangles with each unit containing a raised circular boss in its center, while the lower panel is made up of alternating raised relief compressed lozenges and circular bosses. Above the frieze are two additional bands of pressed tin trim, with the lower one constructed by a stylized boss and festooned with a quarter-

round molding adjoining the ceiling, and the second band being a ceiling border composed of interlocking lozenges containing raised crosses in their centers. The second floor walls and ceilings of the Phillips-Thompson Store retain a good deal of their original and second period finish from the late nineteenth century. The 202 half of the second story is finished with machine-printed wallpapers rising from the baseboard to a papered chair rail and thence to the ceiling. The wallpaper dado is a black and gray composition printed onto a gold ground and is made up of stylized floral and geometric patterns including stars, vines and flowers. A wallpaper chair rail tops the dado with a six-inch wide band. The central element of the band is a three-and-three-quarter-inch wide frieze of circles overlapping and alternating with lozenges containing floral quatrefoils. These elements are shaded with blue, red, and gold and are bonded on the top and bottom by narrow dark blue bands. Above and below the banding are alternating circular and elliptical forms bounded on the outside by a second set of dark blue bands. Above the chair rail is another field of paper reaching to the cornice and printed with a spray and floral design executed in black and gold. Under these wallpapers is an earlier wallpaper composed of fields of lozenges contained in one-and-a-quarter-inch squares and surrounded by six-inch diameter medallions containing a variety of floral and geometric motifs in black, white, gold and red. Beneath the first wallpaper on the east wall and adjacent to the stove flue is a penciled insignia "4th Ward Republican Club." The cornice and ceiling of the 202 section of the Phillips-Thompson Building are also finished with decorative wallpapers. The cornice, delineated by alternating black and gold bands, contains an open and repetitive floral motif of gold leaves and sprays, white vines, and black and white petaled flowers. The papered ceiling also utilizes floral elements in the shape of six white tulips radiating out from a white circular center and divided by serpentine black lines.

The 200 half of the Phillips-Thompson Store also contains early wallpaper in the front second-story room. The walls were finished with a paper pattern of gold floral sprays with red outlines on a pink ground, while the cornice was composed of one gold, black, and green frieze bordered by a black chain and red-, brown- and gold-banded borders.

The meeting hall over 200-202 East Fourth Street was the most elaborately papered of all the rooms. On this floor the meeting hall, which occupied the front half of the combined addresses, was finished on the walls with an abstract and irregular geometric motif of gold-bordered blue shapes on a green ground. At the cornice level the wallpaper displayed a bright floral frieze of gold, green, black, and purple sprays around deep red and orange roses or camellias. The top and bottom of the frieze were accented with black, gold, and olive bands around a central stark band filled with a similarly polychromed egg-and-ribbon molding. The base wallpaper for the ceiling was composed of a series of interlocking white floral elements with a black tracery of vines on a lavender ground. Approximately two feet in from the juncture of the walls and ceiling was a band of wallpaper containing lavender, brown and purple sheaves of wheat on a gilt ground. Finally, where the gas jets descended from the ceilings, there were art nouveau paper medallions with geometrically stylized clusters of abstract floral elements radiating out into a star-like profile with its center at the gas light.

While the former southeast corner room on the third floor was similarly finished, the southeast room was left only plastered without the addition of paint or wallpaper.

The unit of the Phillips-Thompson Building described by the addresses at 204-26 East Fourth Street retains much less of its original interior character than does its neighboring unit. The absence of original material is due to the unbroken string of tenants who have continuously modified the interiors to usages that include apartments, grocery stores, and candy manufacture. The bulk of original material in the Phillips-Thompson store survived in the form of wallpapers preserved through the early conversion of the upper stories into storage lofts. The 204-206 East Fourth Street unit, however, had its upper stories continuously occupied by various tenants with the result that the only significant wall finish is composed of door and window frames and other wooden trim. (See C.3. and C.5.) These wooden architectural elements are milled and identical in profile to those found in the adjacent Phillips-Thompson Store.

Of particular note in 204 and 206 East Fourth Street are the stairways rising from street level to the upper stories. A similar arrangement was removed from the east load bearing wall partitioning 200 from 202 East Fourth Street. The surviving stairs are enclosed within plaster walls applied to sawn wooden lath and finished along the treads with a single baseboard elaborated with applied trim identical to those described elsewhere in the building (See C.2.).

The ground floor of 204 East Fourth Street is currently occupied by Russell Crowe Wholesale Produce and used as an open storage space. The rear of the space has been partitioned into a small wood and glass paneled office overlooking the storage area. 206 East Fourth Street, occupied by Crowe's Seafood, has been more heavily altered with two walk-in fish lockers built into the rear of the unit and a new office inserted against the east wall under the stairs leading to the apartments above. Although early trim and wall treatments have been lost on the ground floor of the 204-206 East Front Street unit, the open work spaces they contain are not dissimilar to the original design.

C.5. Openings. Window architraves throughout the Phillips-Thompson Building are composed of single milled beams with mitered corners at the top and butt joints at the sills. The board architraves project an inch from the wall and proceed in a series of sharp moldings with flat, convex, concave, channeled and three-quarter bead profiles over the four-inch face of the boards. The window sills have an apron of the same material beneath a half-round nosing.

Original interior door frames are completed with the same molding stock, while later doorways for the second period stair in 200-202 East Fourth Street are plain, nailed scantling architraves. The doors echo those found in the street level store fronts and are composed of four lightly raised panels fitted into chamfered rails and stiles finished with flared terminals.

C.6. Mechanical Systems. Of particular note are the second and third story gas jets in the Phillips-Thompson Store. The fixtures are composed of a pair of armatures fastened to a single piece extending down from the ceiling.

The jets at the end of each armature are pressed metal and decoratively finished with stars and reeding.

In addition to the gas fixtures, the mechanical systems include a freight elevator located against the west wall of 200 East Fourth Street. The freight elevator, which operates from the basement to the third floor, is powered by an electric motor mounted overhead in the second floor southwest room of 200 East Fourth Street. Run from overhead line shafting holding cast iron belt wheels and leather belting, the elevator rises on two flanged iron rails mounted in the wall and is lifted by a single wire cable fastened to a wooden crosstree. The elevator platform is enframed on the south with two-inch vertical beaded board, on the west with two-inch horizontal beaded board, and on the north with three-inch slats with three-and-a-half inch spacings between each slat and the whole joined with a diagonally placed brace. On each floor the elevator opening is defined by a two board rail and a hinged section of flooring sealing of the shaft. Although there is no discernable manufacturer's plate, the present electric control panel is a product of the Allis-Chalmers Company.

The sole plumbing fixture remaining from the first period of the building is a workman's toilet stall located in the southeast basement corner of 200 East Fourth Street. The toilet is a circa one-foot diameter cast iron stand pipe housed in a two-inch tall vertical board stall centered through a latticed door of the same material.

D. Site.

D.1. General Setting and Orientation. The Phillips-Thompson Building (including 200, 202, 204, and 206 East Fourth Street) stands on the northeast corner of Fourth and French Streets with its primary facade facing north towards the present commercial center of Wilmington. The buildings overlook a two-block area cleared of all structures. Of the four corners at the intersection of Fourth and French Streets, the corner occupied by the Phillips-Thompson Building is the only one retaining any sort of structure. Adjacent to the east end of the grouping are two stores: 208 East Fourth, being of mid-twentieth-century construction masking an earlier facade, and 210 East Fourth Street, of early twentieth-century vintage with a cast concrete date stone containing an eagle and crown cast in raised relief and the date 1933. A dead-end alley enters onto French Street, extending behind the block of storefronts as far as 208 East Fourth Street.

D.2. Outbuildings. Although there are no outbuildings associated with the Phillips-Thompson Building, there were other building complexes in Wilmington and New Castle County which provided support services for the commercial operations of the agricultural store at Fourth and French Streets. One of these, located elsewhere on Fourth Street, was described in a 1926 insurance appraisal and included an elevator, scale shed, warehouse, corn crib, coal trestle, wagon shed, stable, and garage. The New Castle County connection consisted of a milling operation located in the village of Greenbank. The mill was possibly the Greenbank Mill located on the Red Clay Creek and listed in the National Register of Historic places on July 2, 1973. Neither of these properties, however, is physically connected to the Phillips-Thompson Building.

Part III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography.

A.1. Primary and Unpublished Sources. Street and business directories from the mid-nineteenth century to the present under the aegis of numerous editors. The directories citing the Phillips-Thompson building begin in 1886 with:

W.M.R. Williamson, Manager, The Wilmington City Directory for 1886, (Wilmington, Ferris Brothers) 1886.

The directories for 1887 through 1893 were managed by W. Costa and for 1894 and 1895 by M. A. Costa. Following the Costas' stewardship the annual production of the directories was managed by Homer Barry (1896-1897), James Gopsill (1898), the Wilmington Advertising Company (1900-1903), and the Eastern Directory Company (1904-1917). From 1918 to the present the publication of the Wilmington directories has been the business of the R. C. Polk Company in Philadelphia. A citation for the Polk directories will typically appear as:

Polk's Wilmington City Directory (Delaware), (Philadelphia, R.C. Polk and Company).

A complete run of Wilmington directories is on file at the Historical Society of Delaware, 505 Market Street, Wilmington, Delaware.

Keystone Appraisal Company, "Appraisal of the Phillips-Thompson Company, Wilmington, Delaware, (manuscript, College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy, University of Delaware) 1926.

Sanborn Map Company, Insurance Maps of Wilmington, Delaware, (New York, Sanborn Map Company) 1927.

Part IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The recordation of the Phillips-Thompson Building (200-202, 204, and 206 East Fourth Street) was conducted by the College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy, University of Delaware, for the Department of Planning, City of Wilmington, Delaware. The project personnel included Bernard L. Herman, David L. Ames, and Dennis Keiser. Bernard Herman provided the written description and figures; David L. Ames made the photographic record; and Dennis Keiser rendered assistance in the field. The recording team's liaison with the City of Wilmington was through Patricia Maley, Department of Planning.

FIGURE 1

PHILLIPS-THOMPSON BUILDING:
200, 202, 204 and 206 East Fourth Street --
First Floor Plan, 1981

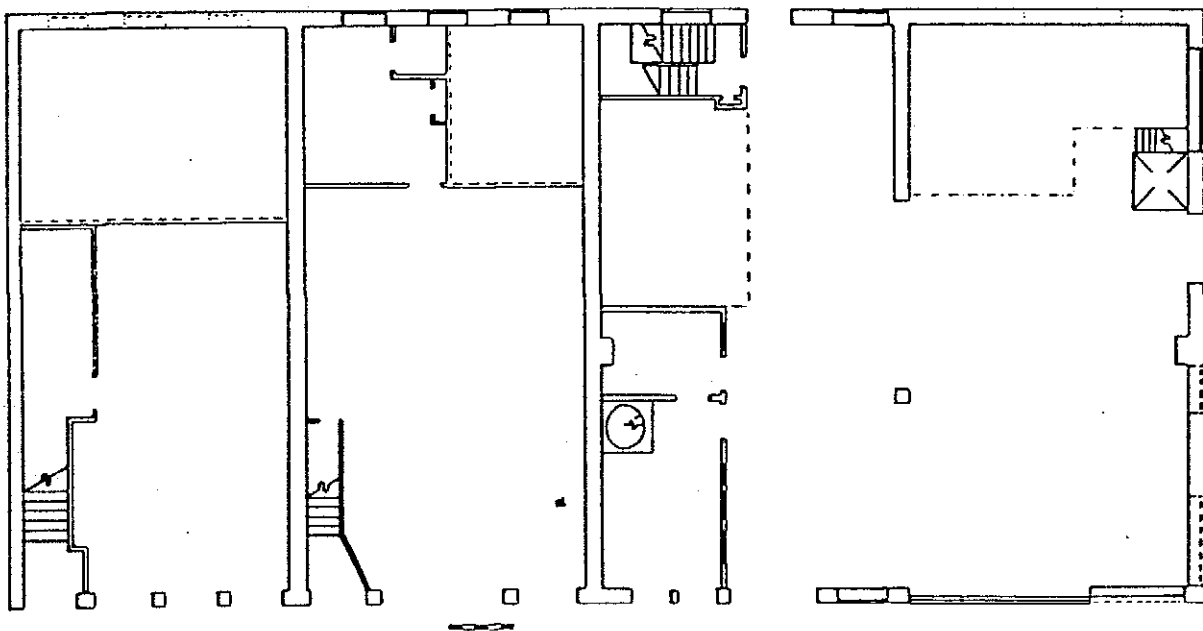


FIGURE 2

PHILLIPS-THOMPSON BUILDING:
200-202 East Fourth Street --
Second Floor Plan, 1981

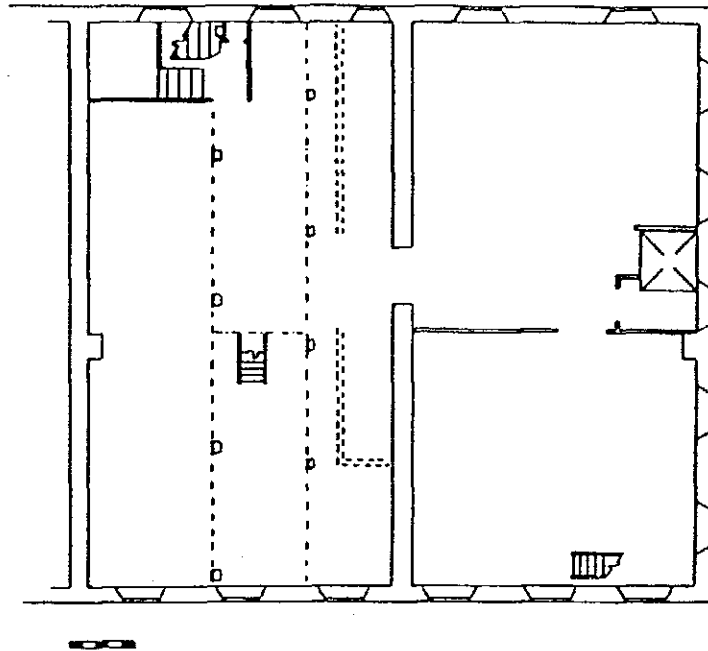


FIGURE 3

PHILLIPS-THOMPSON BUILDING:
200-202 East Fourth Street --
Third Floor Plan, 1981

